CHAPTER NINE

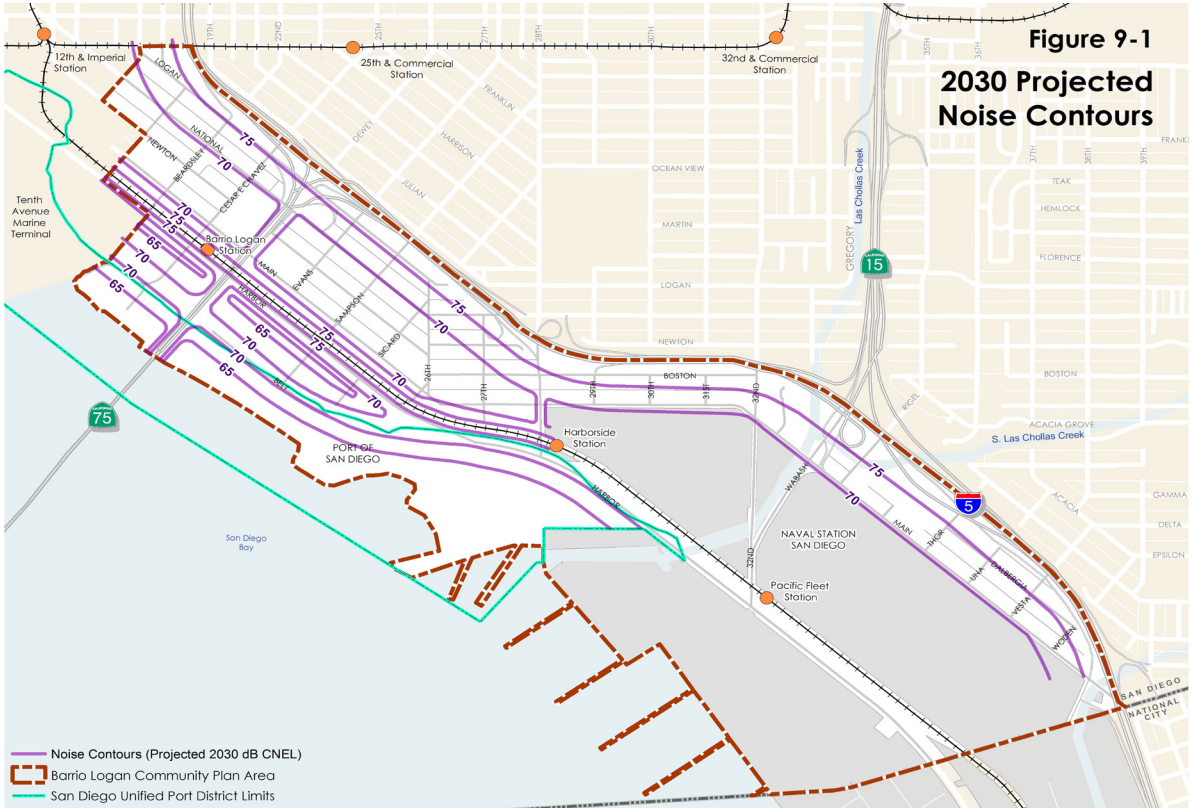
noise element

IN THIS CHAPTER

The Community Plan Noise Element provides goals and policies to guide compatible land uses and the incorporation of noise attenuation measures for new uses that will protect people living and working in the City from an excessive noise environment. Where possible, new noise sensitive uses should avoid or attenuate excessive, or harmful noise levels to help maintain a pleasant and livable noise environment. Sensitive land uses include residential sites, schools, and libraries.

GOALS

- Minimize exposure of commercial and industrial noise to noise-sensitive land uses
- Reduce excessive truck and other motor vehicle traffic noise levels that impact noise-sensitive land uses.
- Reduce excessive rail noise near noise-sensitive land uses.



Barrio Logan is an active urban community with a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. However, this diverse mix of uses creates issues of incompatibility, resulting in sensitive uses being exposed to higher noise levels. Noise can affect the environment and well-being of people living, working, and visiting a community. Industrial and commercial areas can have a higher ambient noise level than residential areas. Noise from commercial and industrial, freeways and major streets, and rail operations affect the Barrio Logan community.

The General Plan provides sufficient policy direction for noise-related issues; therefore minimal additional policies have been provided specifically for Barrio Logan. Community Noise Equivalent Level or CNEL is the noise rating scale used for land use compatibility. The CNEL rating represents the average of equivalent noise

levels, measured in decibels (dB), at a location for a 24-hour period, with upward adjustments added to account for increased noise sensitivity in the evening and night periods. Figure 9-1 illustrates noise contours from freeways, major roads, and rail lines. The General Plan specifies that noise levels at or below 70 dB are conditionally compatible for multi-family residential uses and 65 dB for single family, children's schools and other sensitive receptors uses if sound attenuation measures are included to reduce the interior noise levels to 45 dB. Typical attenuation measures are addressed in the General Plan. As the figure shows, only a small part of the community, mainly adjacent to I-5, is susceptible to noise impacts over 70 dB. The greatest noise impacts are along Boston Avenue adjacent to I-5. The noise contours do not reflect changes in noise levels due to topography, such as the freeway depressed below ground level or other physical barriers including vegetation, walls, or buildings. Although not generally considered compatible, the General Plan does conditionally allow multifamily uses within areas up to 75 dB with noise attenuation in areas affected primarily by motor vehicle traffic noise with existing residential uses.

9.1 COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY

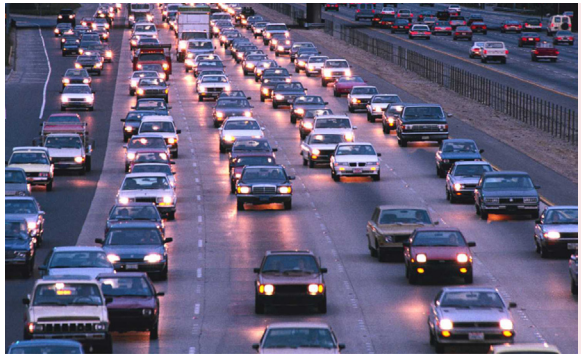
Noise from the shipbuilding, repair yards, and other outdoor uses are audible within many areas of the community, however the effects from stationary noise sources are fairly limited to the immediate surroundings. Industrial activity noise is either emitted on-site or through the distribution of goods and materials to and from the site. In an area where residences and other sensitive receptor uses are present, the potential for noise impacts are especially important to evaluate.

Commercial activities, such as deliveries during late night and early morning hours, generate noise that can affect the nearby residential uses. Reducing the effect from commercial activity noise involves identifying and integrating noise attenuation measures in new buildings that will reduce interior sound levels.

Commercial and industrial activities can create high amounts of noise

9.2 MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC

Vehicle traffic noise is directly related to the traffic volume, speed, and mix of vehicles. SR-75, I-5, Harbor Drive, 28th Street, and 32nd Street are the primary sources of motor vehicle noise within the community. Noise from trucks driving within, or parked and idling along roads in the community can also be a source of annoyance for noise sensitive uses. Barrio Logan is affected by truck traffic associated with industrial and commercial land uses, the U.S. Navy, and the Port of San Diego. Trucks in general generate more noise than cars and light trucks. Heavy trucks that support Port operations tend to generate more noise than medium trucks that support commercial and light industrial uses. Refer to General Plan policies NE.B.1 through NE. B.8 for further direction.



Vehicle traffic creates noise

MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC POLICIES

Policy 9.2.1 Reduce the effect of noise from motor vehicle trafffic. This can be accomplished through use of the following techniques:

- Use building setbacks to increase distance between the noise source and receiver;
- Provide sound barriers (earth berms or masonry walls) between habitable space and the noise source;
- Orient buildings to shield outdoor spaces from noise sources;
- Locate parking lots, and other non-habitable uses between the noise source and receptor;
- Incorporate forced-air ventilation systems to allow windows and doors to be closed;
- Use double-paned or sound rated windows;
- Incorporate sound insulating exterior walls and roofs;
- Use attic vents to minimize sound intrusion into structures.

Policy 9.2.2 Utilize berms, walls, and buildings adjacent to I-5 to reduce the effect of noise on nearby noise sensitive uses.

Trolley and train noise are sources of noise in the community

9.3 RAIL NOISE

Rail noise is a source of noise in the community. Freight trains and light rail transit (trolley) can generate high, relatively brief, intermittent noise events within the vicinity of at grade rail crossings where horns and crossing bells are sounded. Federal regulations require trains to sound their horns at all roadway-rail grade crossings. Horns, whistles and bells on the moving trolley vehicles, and horns from freight trains, combined with stationary bells at grade crossings can generate excessive noise levels that can affect noise sensitive land uses. To minimize excess train horn noise, the federal government allows the establishment of train horn "quiet zones." This requires the implementation of safety measures to compensate for the loss of the train horn usage. The General Plan has further policy direction for trolley and train noise found in policies NE.C.1 through NE-C.4.

Additionally, Policy 3.2.6 supports roadway-rail grade seperation since this will eliminate the need for bells and horns at the existing grade crossing which will reduce the noise level.

RAIL NOISE POLICY

Policy 9.3.1 Prohibit residential uses along Main Street.